The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

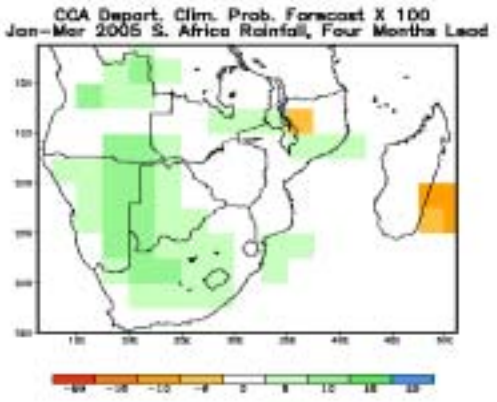
September 30 – October 6, 2004

Weekly Introduction:

CCA Outlook for January-March at Four Months Lead

Southern Africa

The outlook for Jan-Mar 2005 southern Africa rainfall at four months lead, safjfm4.gif, shows a tilt in the odds favoring above normal rainfall across central South Africa, most of Namibia, central and western Botswana, portions of southern and northern Angola, locally over east central Zambia, the southern half of Malawi, and portions of northern and southern Mozambique. There is a tilt in the odds favoring below normal rainfall locally over northern Mozambique and southeastern Madagascar. Climatology is expected elsewhere.



Locust Update

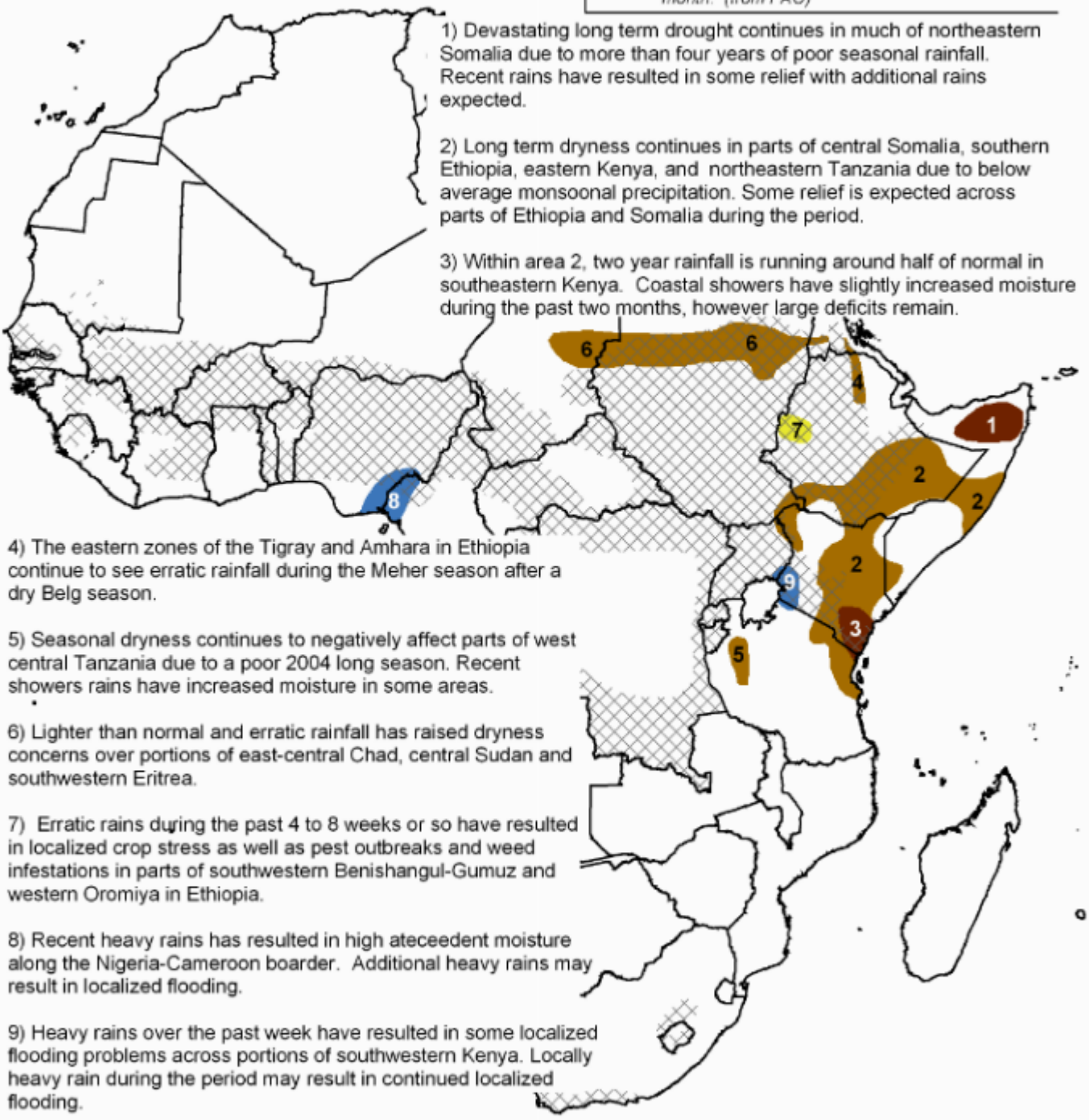
The report from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations on the locust situation in western Africa was last updated on September 28. They report that swarms have started moving into northwest Mauritania.

Additional details can be found at the USAID web site for Assistance for Emergency Locust/Grasshopper Abatement (AELGA) at http://www.aelga.net and the Agrhymet site at http://www.agrhymet.ne.

Weather Hazards Assessment Graphic:

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

NOTE: Black hatched regions depict combined wheat, maize, sorghum, and millet crop zones which are active (sowing to harvest) during the current month. (from FAO)



1) Devastating long term drought continues in much of northeastern Somalia due to more than four years of poor seasonal rainfall. Recent rains have resulted in some relief with additional rains expected.

2) Long term dryness continues in parts of central Somalia, southern Ethiopia, eastern Kenya, and northeastern Tanzania due to below average monsoonal precipitation. Some relief is expected across parts of Ethiopia and Somalia during the period.

3) Within area 2, two year rainfall is running around half of normal in southeastern Kenya. Coastal showers have slightly increased moisture during the past two months, however large deficits remain.

4) The eastern zones of the Tigray and Amhara in Ethiopia continue to see erratic rainfall during the Meher season after a dry Belg season.

5) Seasonal dryness continues to negatively affect parts of west central Tanzania due to a poor 2004 long season. Recent showers rains have increased moisture in some areas.

6) Lighter than normal and erratic rainfall has raised dryness concerns over portions of east-central Chad, central Sudan and southwestern Eritrea.

7) Erratic rains during the past 4 to 8 weeks or so have resulted in localized crop stress as well as pest outbreaks and weed infestations in parts of southwestern Benishangul-Gumuz and western Oromiya in Ethiopia.

8) Recent heavy rains has resulted in high ateceedent moisture along the Nigeria-Cameroon boarder. Additional heavy rains may result in localized flooding.

9) Heavy rains over the past week have resulted in some localized flooding problems across portions of southwestern Kenya. Locally heavy rain during the period may result in continued localized flooding.

Valid: September 30 - October 6, 2004

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. Poor performance of seasonal rains over the past several years has resulted in a devastating long term, multi-year drought across the Sanaag, Sool, Togdheer, Bari and Nugal Provinces of northern Somalia. The 2004 season, however, saw an overall good performance of the long rains. Despite these rains, large long term moisture deficits and severe drought remain. Recent showers have resulted in some improvement. Substantial beneficial rain is expected during the period as the short rains set in. This should result in pasture condition improvement and an increase in local water supplies. However, several consecutive seasons of abundant rainfall will be needed to ease the drought and its impacts on the drought stricken Sool Plateau.

2. The long rains this year were much below normal across central and eastern Kenya, the Somali region of Ethiopia, southern portions of Ethiopia's SNNPR and Oromiya regions as well as the Galguduud and Mudug regions of central Somalia. The season started late and ended early, as little rain fell during March or May. Totals were less than half of normal for the season, with deficits of 100 to 150 mm. Some areas in the higher elevations have deficits exceeding 250 mm. In some areas, this was in addition to deficits resulting from below normal rainfall during 2003. Further west, dry conditions have also been reported across northwestern Kenya and adjacent parts of Uganda and Sudan. The upcoming rainy season typically begins in October and runs through December. Conditions are expected to be dry over Kenya and northern Tanzania, however showers are possible over parts of central Somalia and southern Ethiopia during the period.

3. Multi-year drought has resulted in large long term moisture deficits across southeastern Kenya. Poor performance of the March-May rains has exacerbated long term drought conditions across the area. The long term drought will reduce water supplies and reservoir levels, degrade pastures and may result in reduced sub-soil moisture availability for the upcoming second cropping season. The upcoming rainy season typically begins in October and runs through December.

4. The 2004 Belg season (February-May) was drier than normal across the South Tigray zone as well as North Wello and South Wello zones in the Ahmara region. Rainfall was about half of normal for the season. The season also started late and ended early, with most of the season's rainfall occurring during the month of April. Furthermore, rains during the Meher season have been erratic and lighter than normal. Erratic seasonal rains have been observed in parts of central Eritrea as well. This may have a negative effect on Meher and long cycle crops in the area.

5. Rainfall during the 2003-04 rainy season was about 70 percent of normal across west-central portions of Tanzania. Locally heavy pre-season rains in early September, along with scattered showers last week, helped to boost moisture in the area and improve vegetation and pasture conditions. However, satellite imagery still shows vegetation stress. Conditions are expected to be dry during the period. The upcoming rainy season typically begins in October and runs into April.

6. Rainfall during July and August has been erratic and lighter than normal across east-central Chad, central Sudan into the northern highlands of Eritrea. This includes Biltine in Chad, portions of Darfur and Kurdufan in Sudan as well as Gash Barka in Eritrea. Some areas have seen an increase in shower activity during September, however deficits remain in many areas. The dry conditions may degrade vegetation and pasture conditions, reduce water supplies and negatively affect seasonal crops. Occasional showers are possible over the southern portions of the highlighted area, however most areas will remain dry as seasonal rains retreat southward.

7. Seasonal rains have been erratic across parts of southwestern Benishangul-Gumuz and western Oromiya in Ethiopia over the past 4 to 8 weeks. This has resulted in localized crop stress, pest outbreaks and week infestations. However, it appears that these conditions are localized and that there are areas within the highlighted zone that are reporting an overall good growing season. Seasonal rains are expected throughout the period.

8. Heavy rains have fallen over the past week along the Nigeria-Cameroon boarder. This has raised river levels and resulted in saturated soils. Additional heavy rains are expected during the period which may result in some flooding problems. However, widespread flooding is not expected.

9. Heavy rain fell over southwestern Kenya last week, resulting in some flooding problems across the area. Additional showers, some of which may be heavy, are expected during the period. This has raised concerns over flooding in and around southwestern Kenya. Locations at greatest risk for flooding are low lying areas near streams and rivers.

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